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ABSTRACT

The Junior High School Intensive Care and School Involvement Program (ICSIP) in Washington (District of Columbia) was designed to supplement the regular educational program in four junior high schools by providing academic support, delivering social services to at-risk students, improving the school climate, and mentoring potential dropouts. Expected student outcomes were to improve grades and attendance, develop positive self-concept, and develop a sense of pride and belonging. A variety of descriptive and statistical techniques were used to analyze statistical data related to the program. The following findings are reported: (1) there was a positive correlation between participation in the extended school day component and academic achievement; (2) 291 students identified as potential dropouts received services from an Affective Team composed of a counselor, a social worker, a psychologist, and an attendance officer/counselor; (3) from five to six students from each school participated in mentoring relationships with staff from congressional offices; and (4) three of the four schools formed teams to implement a school improvement model, with training provided by a local college. Recommendations include continuing the extended school day component, expanding the mentor program, and improving the staffing of the Affective Teams. Statistical data are presented in seven tables. Two references and a description of the evaluation and statistical data collection plan are appended. (FMW)

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EVALUATION OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INTENSIVE CARE AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: SY 1989-90

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September 1990

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EVALUATION OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INTENSIVE CARE AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, SY 1989-90

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EVALUATION OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INTENSIVE CARE AND SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM: 1989-90

Introduction

The Junior High School Intensive Care and School Involvement Program (ICSIP), operational through the State Office of Special Education in the District of Columbia Public School system (DCPS), was designed to supplement the regular educational program in the areas of academic support, social service delivery, school climate improvement and development of mentor relationships for students at-risk of dropping out of school. Program components were (1) extended day, (2) affective team, (3) congressional mentorship and (4) school involvement. Initiated during the spring of 1989, four junior high schools, Garnet-Patterson, Kramer, Lincoln and Sousa, participated in the program. Findings from an evaluation of the summer 1989 program indicated that students were more positively disposed towards staying in school after being exposed to smaller classes with individualized instruction, caring/skilled teachers and a supportive, nurturing school experience (Stevenson, 1989).

Determination as to whether a student is at-risk of dropping out of school was made by the faculty at each school. Student participation in the ICSIP was predicated by this identification process. Based on their needs, students participated during the regular school year or during the summer in one or more program components. Extended day services are available on weekdays after school and/or on Saturdays. Services of the Affective Team are available throughout school year/school day to address socially related problems which impact upon student's school performance and attendance. Individual student support is available through the Congressional Mentor component throughout the school year and summer months as the student-mentor relationship develops. The school involvement component endeavors to enlist the cooperation and collaboration of school staff, parents/community and students in efforts to improve the school climate/environment.

Expected outcomes of the ICSIP for students were (1) better grades, (2) improved school attendance, (3) positive concepts of self and (4) pride/sense of belonging with the school. Those outcomes may be viewed as factors related to an improved school climate as well as elements necessary to insure more student and family involvement in the schools.

A federal Dropout Demonstration Assistance Grant provided support for ICSIP at two of the junior high schools with DCPS providing support at the remaining two project schools.

The Intensive Care School Improvement Program

The ICSIP contained the following components each semester during SY 1989-90:

First Semester: School based affective teams were composed of an "At-Risk" counselor (full-time), social worker (full-time), psychologist (half-time) and an existing school-based attendance officer. This team provided individual and small group support to students identified as at-risk of dropping out. Group counseling and peer support groups were integral to services provided in meeting students school and home environmental needs. Linkages with parents and monitoring of student progress indicators were among the activities provided by the affective team.

Mentoring relationships were developed to supplement the regular school program in academic and support efforts.

School staff, parents, students and community members were involved in school involvement activities introduced through Reaching Success Through Involvement (RSI) component activities to promote improvement of school climate and aid local school training.

Second Semester: In addition to affective teams and mentoring programs, extended day programming was provided. Support was provided in English, mathematics, science and social studies through an extended day program for students who were having academic difficulty. Students were offered individualized assistance based on need.

The Evaluation and Data Collection Plan for the ICSIP

Staff from both the DCPS State Office of Special Education and the Research and Evaluation Branch met during April 1990 to plan data collection for evaluation of program implementation and effectiveness. Project staff collected baseline data on each program participant for use in formative assessment and to facilitate long-range summative evaluation activity. The evaluation and data collection plan for the Junior High School Intensive Care and School Involvement Program (ICSIP) is presented in the Appendix (page 14).

Data Analysis

Data collected for the SY 1989-90 evaluation were analyzed using the following descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Demographic information on students were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and medians. Relational data were analyzed using Chi-square statistics.

FINDINGS

I. Academic Reinforcement/Remediation Component: Data collected from the extended day component at each school were analyzed to provide a profile of the 271 students identified as requiring academic support. The average student in the extended day program was 14 years old with an eighth grade median grade level classification. Fifty-nine percent of the participants were males. Ninety-five percent of the students were African-American and the remaining 5% were Hispanic. Forty-three percent of the students in the extended day program had been retained at least once while only 15 students (6%) were reported to have been previously suspended from school.

At-risk students were assigned to attend the extended day program an average of 22 days. Of the 271 students assigned to attend, 136 (50%) were only assigned for two or less days. Students chose to attend the extended day program an average of 19 days.

A summary of the average number of objectives mastered by subject for students participating in the extended day program are noted below.

Table 1

Average Number of Objectives Mastered By Participants in the Extended Day Program

Subject	Number of Objectives Mastered	Sample Size
English	15	102
Mathematics	11	87
Science	13	109
Social Studies	14	58

The greatest number of objectives were mastered in English.

Percentages for and number of students that passed courses for which they received assistance through the extended day program are noted below.

Table 2

Percentage of Students Passing Courses for Which Assistance was Provided in the Extended Day Program

Subject	Percentage Passing	Sample Size
English	86	96
Mathematics	88	92
Science	92	100
Social Studies	81	66

While the percentage of students passing each course exceeded 80%, the highest percentage of passing occurred for students receiving academic reinforcement in science.

Chi-square statistical procedures were used to analyze relationships among the demographic and outcome measures collected on the extended day program. With the alpha level set at the .05 level, significant positive relationships were found for the:

(1) number of days assigned to the extended day program and the number of objectives mastered in English, mathematics, social studies and science,

(2) number of days attended and the number of objectives mastered in social studies and science, and

(3) number of days attended extended day and final grades in each subject except science.

The implication of these findings is that students assigned to extended day for a greater number of days were more likely to master a greater number of course objectives than students rarely assigned to the extended day program. It also followed that students who chose to attend the extended day program were more likely to pass the subject in which assistance was provided than students with infrequent attendance. The relationship of attendance to achievement in the ICSIP is supported in this formative study as per the research literature.

No other significant relationships were found. As academic progress is monitored longitudinally for the 271 students included in this component during SY 1989-90, the impact on at-risk students of variables such as retentions, suspensions, age, etc. may prove more illuminative.

II. Social Service Component (Affective Team): The Affective Team was to be composed of an "At-Risk" counselor, a social worker, a psychologist and an attendance officer/counselor. Two hundred ninety one students identified as at-risk were initially contacted to receive affective team services. Data on incidence and type of service delivery provided by the affective team are summarized below by school.

Garnet-Patterson Junior High School: Initial contacts were made with 58 students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.

Table 3

Affective Team Services Provided at Garnet-Patterson
During SY 1989-90

Services	Counselor	Social Worker	Attendance Officer	Totals
Number of Home Visits	0	n/a	40	40
Number of Community Organizations Contacted/ Visited	3	n/a	20	23
Number of Parent/Family Conferences	8	n/a	10	18
Number/Services Referrals*	15	n/a	30	45
Number/Nature of Individual/ Group Interactions@	278	n/a	20	298

* Types of services: Truancy hearings, health, employment and tutorial

@ Nature of interactions: Provide information, behavior modification, schedule review, problem solving and decision making

A social worker was not identified to provide affective team services at Garnet-Patterson Junior High School.

Kramer Junior High School: Initial contacts were made with 64 students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.

Table 4

Affective Team Services Provided at Kramer
During SY 1989-90

Services	Counselor	Social Worker	Attendance Officer	Totals
Number of Home Visits	31	n/a	n/a	31
Number of Community Organizations Contacted/ Visited	13	n/a	n/a	13
Number of Parent/Family Conferences	25	n/a	n/a	25
Number/Services Referrals*	14	n/a	n/a	14
Number/Nature of Individual/ Group Interactions@	321	n/a	n/a	321

* Types of services: Family shelter, welfare assistance and Aid to Dependent Children

@ Nature of interactions: Behavior modification, attendance and academic progress making

A social worker was not identified to provide affective team services at Kramer Junior High School. Attendance staff assigned to Kramer chose not to participate in record keeping for the ICSIP.

Lincoln Junior High School: Initial contacts were made with 89 students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.

Table 5

Affective Team Services Provided at Lincoln During SY 1989-90

Services	Counselor	Social Worker	Attendance Officer	Totals
Number of Home Visits	37	49	42	128
Number of Community Organizations Contacted/ Visited	50	61	552	663
Number of Parent/Family Conferences	20	34	79	133
Number/Services Referrals*	18	35	82	135
Number/Nature of Individual/ Group Interactions@	586	638	891	2,115

* Types of services: Protective services, counseling centers, day care, Metropolitan Police Youth Division, health services and P.I.N.S. (Urban League)

@ Nature of interactions: Crisis intervention, attendance counseling, emergency social services, behavior/attitude counseling and morals/values

Sousa Junior High School: Initial contacts were made with 80 students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.

Table 6

Affective Team Services Provided at Sousa
During SY 1989-90

Services	Counselor	Social Worker	Attendance Officer	Totals
Number of Home Visits	2	10	9	21
Number of Community Organizations Contacted/ Visited	13	22	5	40
Number of Parent/Family Conferences	19	25	11	55
Number/Services Referrals*	20	22	n/a	42
Number/Nature of Individual/ Group Interactions@	237	142	126	505

* Types of services: Parental conferences via telephone, protective services (child) and teen life choices

@ Nature of interactions: Individual counseling, academic advisement, career counseling, class observations, group sessions and teacher conferences

III. Mentoring Component: Each of the schools participated in the Congressional Mentorship component initiated by ICSIP staff. A summary of participation and services is summarized below:

Table 7

A Summary of Participation in the Congressional Mentorship Component

	Garnet-Patterson	Kramer	Lincoln	Sousa
Number of Congressional Offices Participating	4	5	5	5
Total Number of Mentors	14	33	8	10
Number of Students Participating	5	6	7	5
Frequency of Contact	2/week	2/wk	2/wk	1/wk
Types of Contacts	Telephone/ One-on-one	One-on-one	Telephone/ One-on-one	Telephone/ One-on-one
Number of School Visits	4	1	4	5

A range of 5 to 6 students participated in the Congressional Mentorship component from each school. Congressional staff from approximately 5 offices participated in the program. Each congressional office assumed responsibility for mentoring one student. The mentoring component emphasized one-on-one contact and tutorial services for participating students.

Summarized below are the types of activities that Congressional Mentors participated in by school.

Garnet-Patterson:

At School-

Visits during lunch and participation in graduation exercises

On the Hill-

Tour of Capitol Hill, attendance at Committee Hearings, tutoring

Other-

Basketball games and attendance at automobile show.

Kramer:

At School-

None identified

On the Hill-

Tours of the Hill, Introduced to Members of Congress

Other-

Tours of the Air and Space Museum, White House and Smithsonian Museum; attended a boat show and a Bullets game; went out to dinner; and visit to M.L. King Library.

Lincoln:

At School-

Tutoring

On the Hill-

Tutoring and tour of Capitol Hill

Other-

Tours/visits to the National Aquarium and the Baltimore Inner Harbor

Sousa:

At School-

Lunch and tutoring

On the Hill-

Visit to congressional offices, tour of Capitol Hill and lunch

Other-

Attended a basketball game and a movie.

IV. Reaching Schools Through Involvement (Vanderbilt University):

One of the initial projects provided by the Reaching Schools Through Involvement (RSI) team was a training/staff development retreat to orient the school involvement teams. Dr. Ron Mells from the RSI component conducted staff development for staff from the 4 schools. Most of the staff development activities focused on team building, problem-solving and collegiality. Staff development was provided by RSI in a two day retreat with teams from each school as participants. Additional staff development related to RSI was provided by staff from the State Office of Special Education.

Three of the 4 schools formed local school based teams to implement the school involvement model. Teams were generally composed of teachers, counselors, social workers and a building administrator. Team sizes

ranged from five to nine with the average team size being seven. The three functional teams met an average of seven times during SY 1989-90.

Parents, teachers and students were involved in RSI training activities at Kramer Junior High School which resulted in some collaborative school projects such as graffiti removal and repainting of school lavatories. Students and teachers at Sousa and Lincoln were also jointly involved in school beautification activities.

Closing activities included data collection for evaluation purposes and the development of action plans for SY 1990-91. Those activities were facilitated State Office of Special Education staff.

DISCUSSION

Findings of this formative evaluation study provide strong support for continuation of the extended day component. Students that attend the extended day component for remediation and/or academic reinforcement mastered more objectives in their course of study and were more likely to achieve a passing course grade in the subject reinforced. Over 80% of the students that participated regularly in the extended day component passed courses for which remediation was provided.

Data also show that where the affective team, composed of the counselor, attendance officer and social worker, was fully staffed, a greater number of individual/group interactions with students, parents and community agencies took place. The addition of a psychologist at each site would likely expand the affective teams ability to deliver services. Implied by increased interactions is the perception that efforts were being made to meet students basic and socio-emotional needs. The affective teams without the full staff complement reported less frequent interactions with students and external groups.

These findings reinforce those described by Tuck (1988) in the study of students that left. In essence, DCPS student dropouts indicated that among the factors related to their leaving school were lack of academic success in school and the feeling that no one cared. If program elements can be put into place to provide students at-risk with successful educational experiences and meet their basic and socio-emotional needs, then the number of students apt to leave school without graduating will likely be reduced.

The Congressional Mentorship component, which provided positive role models and tutorial assistance for students at-risk of dropping out of school, was an excellent volunteer outreach effort launched by the State Office of Special Education. Students had the opportunity to interact with Congressional staff and to experience different aspects of Capitol Hill. As a new outreach effort, the number of students who were able to take advantage of the Congressional Mentorship

Component was small (about five students from each school). Also, most of the interactions appeared to take place on Capitol Hill, thus while students were exposed to the world of the mentors, little opportunity was afforded the mentors to interact with students in their school or home environments. The impact of this outreach activity on student performance or attitudes cannot be validly assessed at present.

The impact of the final component of the ICSIP, Reaching Schools Through Involvement (RSI) staff development activities provided by Vanderbilt University, is unclear. School Improvement Teams were formed at three of four school sites. Teams were oriented to the RSI model during various training activities and a retreat. The use and effectiveness of teams, their experiences as participants in RSI training activities, impact on parental/community involvement in the schools and their contribution to improving schools is not known. DCPS program staff, more familiar with the contributions of the RSI model to improvement at the impacted schools, should consider whether it would be more cost effective and efficient to identify/develop school improvement training expertise closer to home. Paying to train a DCPS staff person or using services provided by a local university is likely to identify trainers that can relate better to the urban school experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this formative evaluation study, the following recommendations are made for refining/improving the ICSIP.

1. Extended day reinforcement and remediation services should be continued at each school with a beginning date to occur earlier in the school year. After the first advisory, students identified as at-risk should begin to receive academic and counseling services that emphasize support and caring.

2. Affective teams should be appropriately staffed and trained to provide students with the socio-emotional supports that they need and to reach out/provide support to parents using available school and community resources. Every school in this component should have access to an at-risk counselor, social worker, part-time psychologist and an attendance counselor to keep students in school and provide necessary supports.

3. Mentorship experiences should be expanded to include exposure of more students to positive role models. Mentors should be exposed to schools and asked to provide some of their time as tutors at the school site. An outcome from the mentorship experience should be that students learn from mentors and mentors develop a greater understanding of the students experiences. This would facilitate bonding.

4. The State Office of Special Education should explore various avenues for providing necessary staff development and training for participating school teams focusing on school involvement. Possible local providers of training should be identified and a model developed that takes into consideration needs of an urban, African-American dominant student population and work force.

5. The State Office of Special Education should continue to collect data on progress indicators of students that participate in the ICSIP through their completion of high school to determine if services provided have a long-term impact on the number of school completions.

References

Stevenson, Z.J. An evaluation of the junior high school intensive care school involvement program summer component. District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of Educational Accountability and Planning, Research and Evaluation Branch, October 1989.

Tuck, K.D. A study of students who left: D.C. Public School dropouts. District of Columbia Public Schools, Division of Quality Assurance and Management Planning, October 1988.

APPENDIX A

[The Evaluation and Data Collection Plan
for the Intensive Care School Improvement Program]

The Evaluation and Data Collection Plan for the ICSIP

Academic Reinforcement/Remediation Component

1. Component Description

   - Project director should write a brief description of an observed extended day component operation in one or more of the 4 program schools

2. Demographic Data on Students/Staff

   - Demographic information on characteristics of extended day student participants will be collected by project staff consisting of the following: Number of retentions, suspensions, sex, race, age, number of objectives mastered in subjects reinforced, grades in subjects reinforced through extended day, etc.

3. Assess the Impact of the Extended Day Component

   - Data from item 2 (above) was analyzed to determine the extent to which students mastered objectives and received passing grades in remediated/reinforced subjects.

   - Data from item 2 (above) was analyzed to determine the extent to which attendance in the extended day component was related to the number of mastered objectives and passing grades received in remediated/reinforced subjects.

Social Service Component (Affective Team)

1. Component Description

   - Project director should write a brief description of the affective team component in one or more of the 4 program schools

2. Assess the Impact of the Affective Team Component

   - Project staff will collect information that will assist in determining for each component site the number of students at-risk of dropping out/failure; average number of students served; number of home visits made; number of community organizations contacted/visited; number of parent/family conferences;

number/type of social service referrals; number/ nature of individual/group interactions; the staff selection process; and student perceptions of affective/social services.

Mentoring Component

1. Component Description

   - Project director should write a brief description of the mentoring component in one or more of the 4 program schools

2. Extent to which Mentoring Activities were Provided

   - Project staff will provide data on the number of congressional offices providing mentoring services; the type of services/activities provided; and the frequency of mentoring activities.

Reaching Schools Through Involvement (Vanderbilt University)

1. Component Description

   - Project director should write a brief description of the RSI implementation process during SY 1989-90

2. School Involvement

   - Data will be provided by project staff on the (1) extent to which students, staff, parents and community have participated in various school involvement activities, and (2) status of local school-based teams (positions of staff serving on teams, team functions, frequency of interactions, etc.)

3. Staff Development

   - Data will be provided by project staff on the (1) number/type of staff development activities, (2) assistance, monitoring activities and follow-up provided by the DCPS RSI facilitator, and (3) extent to which training activities have emphasized team teaching/learning, peer teaching, student tutorials, etc.